

**Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Full Commission Board Meeting – Approved 12/1/06  
September 1, 2006  
Craft State Office Building, 200 S Silber, Room 045  
North Platte, NE  
9:00 a.m.**

**Chairperson Mr. Daniel Darnall called the meeting to order at 8:55 a.m.**

**A. Roll Call**

Members present were Ms. Mary Ann Burke, Mr. Mike Carruthers, Mr. Daniel Darnall, Ms. Luana Duennerman, Dr. Kenya Taylor and Ms. Barbara Woodhead. Absent were Mr. Joseph Caruso, Mr. James DeVaney, and Ms. Pamela Duin. Staff present was Ms. Tanya Wendel, Executive Director, Ms. Lori Burrage, Business Manager and Ms. Peggy Williams, Interpreter. Interpreter present was Ms. Lorelei Waldron.

**B. Acceptance of the Agenda**

Mr. Darnall asked for changes or additions to the agenda. **Ms. Duennerman made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. Ms. Woodhead seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carruthers, yes; Mr. Caruso, absent; Mr. DeVaney, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Duin, absent; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**C. Acceptance of the Minutes**

**1. Full Commission Meeting – June 2, 2006**

Mr. Darnall asked for changes or additions to the minutes. **Dr. Taylor made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Ms. Burke seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carruthers, yes; Mr. Caruso, absent; Mr. DeVaney, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Duin, absent; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**Audience Comments**

**D. Chairperson's Report**

Mr. Darnall congratulated Mr. Linsay Darnall, Jr who has been hired as the Interpreter Coordinator for Interpretek. Mr. Darnall asked for the Board meeting packet to be sent two weeks prior to the meeting so everyone has ample time to review the materials.

**E. Executive Director's Report**

**1. Biennium Budget FY07-09**

**a. Budget Request 70A**

**1. Adjusted Budget Request**

**b. Modification Budget**

**c. Technology Plan**

Ms. Wendel reported on budget process changes which included an earlier submission for the narrative. The adjusted budget request is requesting additional funds to open an office in Scottsbluff and a part-time Interpreter Coordinator. Ms. Wendel introduced Ms. Donita Mains, Field Rep in North Platte and explained Ms.

Mains is traveling extensively throughout 26 counties in Western Nebraska. Ms. Wendel stated if a Scottsbluff office is approved, a review and possible re-assignment of the current coverage areas for the Field Reps would happen. The Interpreter Coordinator would primarily interpret for the agency since there are now two deaf employees in the Omaha office with no interpreter. The Commission continues to have difficulty getting interpreters for meetings. The proposed salary rate is at the midpoint range in hopes of attracting a qualified person. **Ms. Woodhead made a motion to accept the adjusted budget request as proposed. Dr. Taylor seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carruthers, yes; Mr. Caruso, absent; Mr. DeVaney, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Duin, absent; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.** Ms. Wendel explained the proposed modification budget, state agencies are being asked to reduce their budgets by 5%. To accomplish this, both adjusted requests as well as another position would need to be eliminated. **Ms. Woodhead made a motion to accept the modification budget with the following priorities: #1, North Platte office; #2, Part-time Interpreter Coordinator and #3, Scottsbluff Office. Dr. Taylor seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carruthers, yes; Mr. Caruso, absent; Mr. DeVaney, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Duin, absent; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.** Ms. Wendel explained the Technology Plan includes new lines for the Lincoln office to connect to the State's backbone at the rate of \$850 per month. To address the concerns presented at the June 2nd, Board meeting, new lines were installed in Omaha that enables the public to have direct VP access to the office. Due to this change, the Commission offices cannot communicate with each other. New lines in Lincoln would be required to do this and there is not enough money in the current budget to pay those costs. Ms. Wendel will be meeting with other state agencies that are interested in video access. A grant application has been approved through Voc Rehab for a web based interpreter referral program. Other ongoing projects include recreating all databases and to creating a video clip that will show someone signing our services on the webpage. Ms. Duennerman suggested the Commission conduct a technology expo. **Ms. Woodhead made a motion to approve the Technology Plan with the addition of a technology expo and request additional funding of \$10,000 for the expo. Mr. Carruthers seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carruthers, yes; Mr. Caruso, absent; Mr. DeVaney, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Ms. Duin, absent; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

## **2. Licensing Hearing**

### **a. Public Comment 9/9/06**

### **b. Appointment Local Government**

Ms. Wendel stated notices were mailed to 600-700 individuals that use interpreters and legal notices were posted in newspapers statewide. Written comments can be submitted if people are unable to attend the hearing. The video conference sites are Scottsbluff, North Platte, Kearney, Lincoln, Omaha and Norfolk; each site will have a facilitator. After the public hearing, the Licensing Review Board will review the comments and submit any changes to the Full Commission Board. The Interpreter Issues Committee will meet to review the proposed changes and make a recommendation to the Full Commission Board. The Commissioners will submit their

vote through email. The local government appointment for the Licensing Review Board is Mr. Robert Deaton.

### **3. Program Updates**

#### **a. Central-Western Report**

Ms. Mains reported on her activities which includes covering 26 counties, serving a large number of an aging population that are unable to travel to the Commission office; making many one on one home visits; working with WorkForce Development and the Ticket to Work Program and job site evaluations for equipment needs. Has attended information and hospital fairs and the Governor's Conference on Aging. Ms. Mains recently completed a class through the Hearing Loss Association of America to become a Hearing Loss Support Specialist and will be taking the final exam to get her certificate. The lack of sign language classes in Western Nebraska is a big issue. Ms. Burke suggested purchasing the Gallaudet Dictionary of American Sign Language. Ms. Woodhead thanked Ms. Mains for her work covering such a large area and asked if the Deaf community needs are being met. Ms. Mains feels she has a good rapport and is doing well with the Deaf community. She has new deaf clients in Kimball, Sidney and Alliance with accessibility issues, cable accessibility for VRI and ADA issues. Many were unaware of the Commission office in Western Nebraska. She has been able to get an interpreter for group meetings but not for one on one meetings so they have to write to each other. The Commission is purchasing an Interprettype device to help with that communication. Ms. Woodhead asked how training with 911 centers was proceeding and if a checklist could be developed to see if counties are accessible. Mr. Darnall asked if a survey for deaf and hard of hearing consumers could be developed to see if their needs are being met. Ms. Wendel referred these requests to the Goals Committee.

#### **b. Mentoring Interpreters Across Nebraska (MIAN)**

##### **1. Mentoring Workshop**

##### **2. Mentoring Interpreters Across Nebraska (MIAN) Minutes**

Ms. Wendel reported Ms. Kaika has traveled to Hastings, Grand Island, Cozad and Sidney to promote the program and will be traveling to Scottsbluff with Ms. Mains. The mentoring workshop will be held September 22 – 24, 2006 in Omaha. Weekly e-news will go out to mentors and protégées to keep them involved and motivated. September 25<sup>th</sup> is the target date to start the mentoring cohort group.

#### **c. Mental Health Appointments**

##### **1. Treatment Issues**

##### **2. Goals 2006-09**

Ms. Wendel stated two Mental Health Advisory committee members have terms that are expiring, Ms. Jackie Prater and Ms. Vickie Pratt. Both have expressed interest in continuing to serve. Board members present agreed to allow them to continue to serve. Ms. Peggy Williams expressed concerns connected with regional treatment facilities for deaf and hard of hearing youth. At this time Alegent does not seem interested in developing an intensive treatment program but is hopeful that Boys Town will expand their program. Alegent has asked Ms. Williams to provide training; Ms. Wendel is hopeful that training will create awareness and show the need. Ms. Williams and Ms. Melinda Brown conducted four training sessions for Child Protective Service workers and have two more scheduled. HHS has requested the training be expanded into other areas in their agency. Ms. Williams commended Ms. Brown for

developing the training program. Ms. Wendel suggested a letter be sent to Ms. Brown's supervisor at Boys Town as she spent a significant amount of time and is very committed to the training. Ms. Williams suggested Ms. Brown provide training with the Commission's Field Reps.

**d. Emergency Preparedness Training**

Ms. Williams reported the training is scheduled for September 12<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8:30. Opening speakers will include the Lt Governor, Lincoln Police Chief and Ms. Wendel. Received a limited response from Western Nebraska emergency responders.

**f. State Directors Meeting**

Ms. Wendel attended the national state directors meeting in Palm Desert, California in June, a report is included in the packet. The group is trying to establish a directors association instead of just meeting once a year.

**4. Business Manager Report**

**a. General Ledger**

No discussion.

**F. Subcommittee Reports**

**1. Goals Committee**

**a. Strategic Planning Workplan**

**b. Proposed Agency Goals/Objectives**

Dr. Taylor state the committee suggested the following changes: phase one data collection – finish by September 29<sup>th</sup> instead of October 31. Review the survey results with the Board by October 2<sup>nd</sup> via email. Under Goals 1.1 – to identify 10 Nebraska agencies – limit to EMS services. Add 2.5 – to conduct a technology expo if the funds become available. Ms. Woodhead asked to add objective 3.7 – to collect data from the emergency management agencies in the Western Nebraska service area regarding compliance and accessibility. **Ms. Woodhead made a motion to accept the proposed agency goals/objectives document as amended. Mr. Carruthers seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carruthers, yes; Mr. Caruso, absent; Mr. DeVaney, absent; Ms. Duin, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**2. TRS Advisory Committee**

**a. Equipment Surcharge**

Ms. Wendel reported the Nebraska Equipment Distribution Program is funded by a one cent surcharge. The last two years the program has run out of funds before the end of the fiscal year. Ms. Tami Richardson-Nelson sent a letter asking to increase the surcharge to two cents or change the language so the Public Service Commission can review the fund and adjust it as needed. **Dr. Taylor made a motion to move forward with legislation to amend the equipment distribution program surcharge. Mr. Carruthers seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Ms. Burke, yes; Mr. Carruthers, yes; Mr. Caruso, absent; Mr. DeVaney, absent, Ms. Duin, absent; Ms. Duennerman, yes; Dr. Taylor, yes; Ms. Woodhead, yes. Vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.**

**3. Interpreter Issues**

**a. Court Assignments**

#### **b. Meeting with International Communications Incorporated (ICI)**

Ms. Woodhead reported the committee reviewed the number of legal interpreting requests that are going unfilled. A court appointed committee met with the Supreme Court to increase wages and change cancellation policies. The committee wants an increase to \$50 per hour with a two hour minimum; a cancellation policy with a 48-72 hour advance notice, round trip mileage for over 15 miles and to be paid portal to portal. This will be taken to Judge Gerrard and will be included in their budget request. The proposal will double their budget to roughly \$1.5 million a year and take effect in 2007. Ms. Woodhead is concerned deaf people will go unserved if it doesn't take effect before July 1, 2007. Ms. Wendel responded the Supreme Court has already asked for a deficit appropriation this year. Ms. Wendel has been asked to make a request to have sign language interpreters changed immediately since it is a disability issue. Ms. Duennerman requested a legal interpreting workshop. Ms. Wendel stated she made the same request at the committee meeting since the Supreme Court offers training to other language interpreters.

Ms. Woodhead stated written comments will be submitted for the public hearing regarding the specialty license specifications.

Ms. Wendel stated ICI is an interpreter referral agency based in Lincoln that offers foreign language interpreters and one sign language interpreter. The company has contacted the Commission to discuss their web based referral program and to set up a meeting with Lincoln sign language interpreters to discuss the possibility of working for ICI.

#### **4. Deaf/Hard of Hearing Issues**

Ms. Duennerman stated she was approached by consumers that are very impressed with the Commission newsletter and would like to see more articles written by Board members.

#### **5. Legislative Committee**

Ms. Wendel reported the committee will move forward with the equipment legislation but not with hearing aid legislation. The Board recommended introducing legislation to recognize ASL as a world language.

#### **G. Old Business**

Ms. Woodhead stated several months ago the Commission was asked to join NSDAA and asked if that has been accomplished. Ms. Burrage stated the paperwork required to process a payment through the State's accounting system has been requested numerous times and never received. Without the paperwork, membership dues cannot be paid. Mr. Darnall will follow up with NSDAA.

#### **I. Announcements**

Ms. Burke reported that Metro Community College will have 70 - 75 students taking ASL this fall.

#### **Next Meeting – December 1, 2006, Lincoln Office**

Meeting adjourned at 2:21 p.m.